(a) the total number of Mini-Steel Plants closed as on 31st March, 1998;

(b) the total number of workers rendered jobless due to this closures;

(c) the total production capacity remaining idle due to this;

(d) the reaons for the closure of these units; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to prevent the closures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) As per available information 139 Electric Arc Furnace units (Mini Steel Plants) are closed as on 31.3.98.

(b) The total number of workers rendered jobless due to closure is estimated to be around 32,000.

(c) The closed units represent total capacity of 4.99 million tonnes per annum.

(d) The performance of these units has been adversely affected due to various reasons such as high power tariffs coupled with poor quality; rising input costs; uneconomic production capacities; outdated technology; labour, financial and managerial problems; and demand slow down.

(e) Under the extant industrial policy, the Iron & Steel Industry has been completely liberalized. Market conditions therefore determine the fate of any unit. In case of sickness, Government provides the institutional mechanism of BIFR for considering revival option.

Restructuring the Finances of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam

1652. SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have decided to restructure the finances of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam; and

(b) if not, when Government will finalise the proposal as Rashtriya Ispat Nigam has the latest equipment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) Government have recently, in May, 1998, approved a financial restructuring of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL) and directed RINL to prepare a comprehensive revival plan. A plan has been submitted by RINL and the same is presently under Government's consideration.

Representation from Private Steel Producers

1653. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether private steel producers have represented against the move of financial institutions to further flow of funds to the sector; and

(b) the steps taken to assist the industry still at the completion stage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) Some of the steel companies, especially those whose projects are under implementation, have reportedly expressed a view that additional steel capacity may not be funded at present, mainly in the flat products category, due to the present over-capacity and sluggish demand. Department of Steel has advised the financial Institutions to take a pragmatic view on funding the requirements of the steel industry, especially for the projects under implementation.

अजमेर के निकट धूंधरा क्षेत्र में जस्ता भंडार

1654. **श्री ओंकार सिंह लखावत:** क्या इस्पात और खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि: